



Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE E-HELP DESK ARE NEEDED TO SUPPORT EXPANDING ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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Highlights

Highlights of Report Number: 2007-40-026 to the Internal Revenue Service Commissioner, Wage and Investment Division

IMPACT ON TAXPAYERS

The E-Help Desk Program provides assistance to users of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) electronic products and services. Ensuring the Program provides quality customer service is essential because the number of taxpayers who are electronically filing their tax returns is increasing, and the IRS is continuing to offer more electronic products and services.

WHY TIGTA DID THE AUDIT

In 2002, the IRS established the E-Help Desk Program to assist customers with electronic filing and electronic products and services (e-services). E-services is a suite of web-based products that will allow tax professionals and payers to conduct business with the IRS electronically. In Fiscal Year 2006, over 74 million individual tax returns and over 8 million business tax returns were electronically filed. In addition, over 48 million payments were made using the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System. This audit was initiated to determine whether the IRS E-Help Desk Program is providing quality service for electronically filing and e-services customers.

WHAT TIGTA FOUND

The IRS recognizes the need to provide customers of its electronic products and services with the ability to obtain the assistance they may need to successfully use these products. Since the inception of the E-Help Desk in 2002, the IRS has continued to identify ways to improve Program efficiency and customer service. However, continued expansion in the availability and use of e-services requires that improvements are made to ensure the Program can continue to provide effective customer service. TIGTA has the following concerns about the Program:

- Customer satisfaction is not being measured.

- Quality measures and procedures have not been fully established and developed. The Program has no measure to evaluate the accuracy of the responses the E-Help Desk assistants are providing to their customers.
- Call monitoring and case reviews are currently not being used to evaluate the quality of the Program.
- Processes and procedures have not been developed to ensure predefined solutions are accurate and current or to ensure management information is accurate and reliable.
- Processes have not been developed to ensure employees complete required training.

Furthermore, in the current organizational alignment of the Program, the office that establishes the policies and procedures does not have control over the personnel responsible for carrying out these policies and procedures.

WHAT TIGTA RECOMMENDED

The Commissioner, Wage and Investment Division, should develop a process to ensure customer satisfaction is timely measured, develop quality measures, develop processes and procedures to ensure predefined solutions are accurate, develop processes and procedures to ensure management information is complete and accurate, and realign E-Help Desk Program assistants with the office that establishes policies and procedures.

In their response to the report, IRS officials stated they continue to identify ways to improve the E-Help Desk Program's efficiency and customer service. Management agreed with all recommendations and noted that they have already taken a number of actions to address the recommendations included in the report.

READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full IRS response, go to:

<http://www.treas.gov/tigta/auditreports/2007reports/200740026fr.pdf>.

Email Address: Bonnie.Heald@tigta.treas.gov
Web Site: <http://www.tigta.gov>

Phone Number: 202-927-7037